

# Interactive Classroom

Preparing today's students for tomorrow's world

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## IDEAS

# Research Studies – Learning from Others

## Message from SMART CEO Nancy Knowlton

**A number of years ago**, when I was visiting a European country, someone asked me about the benefits of using interactive whiteboards. I faithfully recounted the findings of various research studies while the person listened attentively. At the end, she waved her hand dismissively and said, "Yes, but we will have to learn this for ourselves and do our own research." I commented about what a shame that was because the research of others could speed the adoption of interactive whiteboards in her country's schools. In fact, analyzing the work and research of experts is a critical step in the learning process.

Today, many teachers and administrators recognize the importance of this step and do analyze existing research on interactive whiteboards in the classroom. They want to know what impacts are documented in research studies and how that research might be applicable within their own environment. With limited funds, accountability at an all-time high and a focus on individual student achievement, it is no wonder that technology product buyers now put more emphasis on research when they make purchasing decisions.

### Supporting research since 1997

SMART has actively supported independent research into interactive whiteboards for about 12 years. Most of that support has involved providing SMART products for a given research project. In return, researchers grant SMART permission to publish and share their findings. Never have we directed or intervened in the research undertaken by teachers, teachers-in-training and professors.

SMART's support has resulted in a considerable body of research that is freely available to our customers, prospects and other interested parties. Much early research came from only a few countries – the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Canada. Not coincidentally, these countries were early adopters, interested in looking more deeply at the positive effects of using a new technology product.

### The findings

We have reported on the findings of many research studies, namely

- Improved engagement
- Improved motivation and attendance
- Support for multiple learning styles and special needs students
- Improved review and retention
- Improved teacher productivity

### An information balancing act

When making decisions about interactive whiteboard purchases and implementations, teachers and administrators may find balancing information from different sources helpful. Thorough analyses of independent research can provide useful context for an insider's understanding of local differences and give decision makers information tailored to the needs of their region.

### Proof of concept

On occasion, there isn't time to undertake research. A viable alternative could be an intense proof of concept – a pilot project in which a school or district outfits a few classrooms with interactive whiteboards in order to prove the benefits they expect to receive from the adoption. It's a living lab of real-time experiences that gives people the information needed to make an informed decision to adopt.

### Learning quickly

In education, as in the corporate world, there is an irrefutable need to learn quickly and learn a lot. Examining existing research on interactive whiteboards can speed up learning and hasten the technology adoption process.

At SMART, we encourage educators everywhere to look at the findings from existing research and apply them in their local context. Students today don't have time for everything to be researched locally. They have one chance for a great education. **ic**

## NEWS

# Denmark Schools Install SMART Products



**Aarhus Kommune**, the local public school district in Aarhus, Denmark, has more than 30,000 students. When the district decided to purchase SMART products for 55 of its schools, it did so because it found them easy to use and reliable.

"SMART offers the best products on the market for our schools. We believe they give us the possibility to share knowledge with other schools in the country," says Sven Storm, a member of Aarhus Kommune's IT team.

The **SMART Board™ 680i2 interactive whiteboard system**, **SMART Hub VE**, **SMART Document Camera** and other SMART products have been installed in classrooms for grades one to ten and are being used by students aged six to sixteen. Storm believes SMART products will work well with their existing technology, including personal computers and software. Teachers, he says, are looking forward to using **SMART Notebook software** to build lesson plans and easily distribute lesson content to students after classes. As well, teachers will enrich lessons with digital resources and materials found in the Gallery in SMART Notebook software and on the SMART Exchange. They will also engage in professional development on SMART products.

Learn more about SMART products, or find out where to **buy them**. **ic**

## SMART Hosts GETS – Latin America 2009



**GETS – Latin America** (the Global Education Technology Summit) brings together Latin American senior leaders in education, government and business to share their experiences in implementing ICT for student success. Supported by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada and hosted by SMART, GETS – Latin America 2009 will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 10 and 11, 2009.

Participants will attend seminars and presentations on topics including the creation of new models for mobile learning, the exploration of public-private partnerships and building ICT-enabled schools for the future. The summit provides a unique opportunity for leaders to connect with other education officials and share challenges and goals for mutual benefit. These discussions also provide SMART's product innovation and development teams with insights for designing products that provide real-world benefits to teachers and students.

For more information on GETS – Latin America 2009, please e-mail [GETS-LA@smarttech.com](mailto:GETS-LA@smarttech.com).

Look for information on GETS events in other regions in future issues of *Interactive Classroom*. [ic](#)

## New SMART Distributor



**On October 27**, SMART held an event in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to announce that [Obeikan Publishers and Booksellers](#) will be the distributor of SMART products in Saudi Arabia. Obeikan will help SMART share expertise and solutions to create and build technology-enabled classrooms throughout the country. [ic](#)

## Teacher Stress – Sources and Solutions



**The fact that problems with** teachers' health and well-being around the world. To fully understand how to address such concerns, the [Teacher Support Network](#), a group of United Kingdom and United States-based charities, conducted research to determine the extent of the problems and develop recommendations.

The Teacher Support Network provides practical and emotional support to those in the education sector. In its UK-wide well-being survey in the fall of 2008, the group asked 777 education professionals for their views.

The report on the survey, *The Path to Better Health and Wellbeing in Education*, fully explains the research and results. The scale and significance of health and well-being problems

in the teaching profession are clear. Findings in the report indicate that over the previous two years:

- 87 percent of the teachers suffered from stress
- 66 percent experienced anxiety
- 42 percent suffered from depression
- 82 percent had trouble sleeping
- 53 percent lacked concentration
- 60 percent said that issues in their workplace were responsible for these feelings
- 78 percent of those who said the workplace was responsible said it was due to excessive workload
- 43 percent of those who said the workplace was responsible said it was due to the rapid pace of change

These problems have a costly impact on the entire education system. For example, research indicates that time taken off because of a teacher's illness disrupts students' learning and puts additional stress on fellow teachers.

The network makes recommendations around training and development, policies and procedures and culture. These include that the health and well-being of all education staff become integral to training and development. Policy recommendations include appointing an independent body to ensure workplaces meet high standards of health and well-being and having those in supervisory roles monitor staff health and well-being. The report also notes the prevalence of the perceived weakness of individuals with health problems, and that this must be addressed. It recommends that cultural change start at the highest levels of education management. With the full study completed and recommendations in place, the Teacher Support Network anticipates policy changes to be the next step in helping overcome chronic issues. [ic](#)

## SMART Releases White Paper on Teacher Stress



**SMART's latest white paper**, *Reducing stress in the classroom: How interactive whiteboards and solution-based integration improve teacher quality of life*, explores research on teacher stress, examines its causes and cites findings that indicate how effectively integrating interactive whiteboards may help reduce some kinds of stress. For example, using an interactive whiteboard to create lessons can shorten lesson preparation time, simplify resource sharing among peers, facilitate differentiated learning and reduce anxiety felt by new teachers. The paper also provides practical tips on purchasing and successfully implementing interactive whiteboards and other classroom technology products.

Read the [white paper](#). [ic](#)

# Developing opportunities to learn and grow

Dr. Monica Beglau



If you asked Dr. Monica Beglau to name one of the greatest causes of failure to adopt or use information and communication technology, her answer might surprise you. "I would say that somewhere between 85 and 90 percent could be blamed on failure to deliver adequate professional development and support," she says.

Beglau is a recognized authority on professional development for today's teachers. She is executive director of eMINTS (enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies), a state- and university-sponsored program to support high quality teaching powered by technology.

The eMINTS program, begun in Missouri in 1999, has expanded to ten more U.S. states and internationally to schools in New South Wales, Australia. Independent analyses of achievement in eMINTS schools show that students significantly outperform their counterparts in regular schools and score higher than statewide student averages in every subject.

One reason eMINTS is so successful, says Beglau, is the collaborative leadership of administrators, district

technology directors and principals who include teachers in all implementation decisions. "Teachers have to be part of the whole implementation team, providing input on everything from when the electrical wiring gets put in to how the desks, tables and equipment are to be arranged in their room. eMINTS is not something that can be done to a school – it has to be done by a school. And the people who make schools work are, by and large, the teachers."

Teachers in the eMINTS program receive more than 220 hours of professional development over two years, followed by coaching and regular mentoring visits to their classrooms. The result, says Beglau, is that teachers improve the way they teach, and the results show up in the students' class work and academic achievements.

Beglau tells the story of a nine-year-old boy who had been labeled as having severe behavioral problems. "He refused to do his work. It wasn't a matter of his intellectual capacity. He was just not motivated. At fourth grade, he was finished with school!" And yet, during his year with an eMINTS-trained teacher, he discovered his ability to work with technology and became the class expert.

The boy's teacher used a passport analogy to describe his transformation, says Beglau. "When he arrived in her classroom, she opened his passport and it said, 'Disinterested, unmotivated. This child has many problems.' But when he left her classroom, his passport was stamped with, 'Unlimited possibilities.' That's all any teacher really wants."

Beglau's self-described mission is to see every child in the world have an opportunity to learn and grow at the level he or she deserves. To her, it's a matter of social justice. "Technology is, I believe, one of the ways our world and our whole civilization are going to advance, and our children and our teachers deserve to be a part of that."

Find out more about eMINTS. [ic](#)

## SMART Teacher Content Challenge Winner

A high school biology lesson on plant reproduction was the winning entry in the United Kingdom category of the SMART Teacher Content Challenge.

Angela Buckley, who teaches at the King Edward VI High School for Girls and has been a SMART Board interactive whiteboard user for two years, was awarded a trip to SMART's world headquarters in Calgary, Canada. Her school also won a SMART Board 680 interactive whiteboard, Bridgit™ conferencing software and the opportunity to be part of a global classroom community initiative.

The goal of the SMART Teacher Content Challenge was to encourage teachers to discover and use digital content to improve learning outcomes. "By building a lesson in SMART Notebook software and using animated content, such as I did in my lesson showing different stages of plant development, the concept was made a lot clearer," says Buckley. "When I used visuals on the interactive whiteboard, in high-quality animation, the concept dropped into place for my students. That's something I couldn't have done any other way." [ic](#)

## State-Accredited SMART PD Program Launched in Hawaii

An innovative six-month professional development program is being piloted in the state of Hawaii. Led by SMART certified trainers, the program trains up to 30 teachers on using SMART Notebook software to create subject- and grade-specific lessons that meet Hawaii's content and performance standards. Participants receive state professional development credits upon completion of the course.

The program launches with a two-day intensive workshop on the basics of SMART Notebook software. It continues with online support for the duration of the course and a one-day, face-to-face meeting at the midterm mark. This training day focuses on effective lesson design using the SMART lesson activity toolkit and other rich-media sources, and on tools for assessing student learning. As the teachers progress, they develop a portfolio of six SMART Notebook lessons, including a teacher reflection component and student work examples.

For more information on the specifics of this professional development program, please e-mail SMART online training specialist [Aariz Khan](#) or SMART education consultant [Jaimie Ashton](#). [ic](#)

## NEWS

## SMART Expands Customer Service in EMEA

SMART's many customers and users in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa), can be assured that their SMART distributor is fully accredited in using SMART products. The launch of the SMART Authorized Service Organization (SASO) program means distributors across the region will be qualified to provide in-country customer and technical support via call centers, e-mail and SMART-trained technicians, installers and certified trainers. To date, more than ten distributors have completed training, and by the end of November 2009, SMART anticipates that all EMEA distributors will be SASO accredited. [ic](#)

# Looking For New Methods of Instruction

## Budapest's Gazdagrét-Csíkihegyek Primary School



### With 22 SMART Board interactive whiteboards

in place, the first SMART Showcase School in Hungary is determined that its 34 teachers and 316 students increase their use of technology. Administrators and teachers of Gazdagrét-Csíkihegyek Primary School also hope the addition of the SMART Response interactive response system and SMART Document Camera will increase student engagement. "Using SMART products means the teachers will use new methods of instruction that add student interactivity. We believe that will improve our students' attitudes to learning," says Dominika Kovács, an English teacher at the public school in Budapest's XI Public School District.

Judit Szalai, another English teacher at Gazdagrét-Csíkihegyek, says that after a year of sharing a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and having attended two SMART training sessions, feedback from her peers has

been "very good – the teachers think SMART Boards are the best product they know."

All of the teachers are currently creating their own interactive lessons using SMART Notebook software. More specifically, biology and chemistry teachers, explains Kovács, are eager to use SMART Board interactive whiteboards to present the digital education content supplied with their textbooks, which will be an interactive, activity-based complement.

The Budapest XI District positively encouraged Gazdagrét-Csíkihegyek's use of SMART Board interactive whiteboards and other SMART products, says Edina Nánássy, a representative of LSK Hungary, SMART's reseller in the area.

Both SMART and the district look forward to the school becoming a place that showcases best practices when it comes to ICT implementation. **ic**

## UK Authority Standardizes on SMART Notebook Software



**Shropshire Local Authority** in Shropshire, UK, announced it has standardized on SMART Notebook software across all of its schools. This came as part of an agreement that underlines a commitment to providing world-class interactive technologies that improve educational standards and prepare young people for the knowledge economy of tomorrow. The first rural school district in the UK to standardize its software platform, the Shropshire Local Authority says the decision affects approximately 165 schools, including primary, secondary and special needs facilities, as well as the authority's designated teachers' professional development centers.

Keith Havercroft, a school improvement adviser from Shropshire Local Authority, says, "[The Authority] is committed to providing the highest educational standards to support every stage of development. We have decided to standardize our operating software platform and have chosen **SMART Notebook software** because it provides a collaborative learning environment to help young people achieve their potential. It also allows a focus on the whiteboard as a live teaching tool rather than simply a surface for projection and presentation."

Under the terms of the agreement, SMART Notebook software will be provided to all Shropshire schools, allowing every teacher to benefit from using SMART Notebook software – regardless of the brand of interactive whiteboard currently in use.

SMART Notebook software is an award-winning collaborative learning application that has more than 20 million users worldwide and sets the standard for creating, delivering and managing interactive lessons. **ic**

### SMART Technologies

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